

The Falmouth & Exeter Students' Union Advice Service

Top 10 House-Hunting Tips

Book an appointment,
get in touch with us:

 01326 255861

 www.thesu.org.uk/advice

 advice@thesu.org.uk

 **THE** FALMOUTH & EXETER
STUDENTS' UNION

1. **Choose your housemates carefully.** You'll be living with these people for a year, sharing the kitchen, the bathroom and everything else. So far as possible, weigh up whether they're likely to live in a way that you'll find acceptable.
2. **Always view the house and try to speak to the current housemates.** They'll be able to tell you the things that you won't find out otherwise such as whether the property suffers from damp, and whether the landlord or letting agent is easy to get in touch with if issues arise.
3. **Read your contract thoroughly** and, if possible, get it checked by an SU Adviser. If there's anything in it that you're not happy with, go back to the landlord or letting agent and suggest changes.
4. **Find out if the contract is going to be joint with the other tenants.** If it is, this means that you're all both jointly and individually responsible for all of the rent. So if one person 'does a runner' or even if someone drops out and moves back home, the landlord could chase any of you for the money owed or your parents if they're listed as your guarantor. Make sure you're happy with this arrangement before you sign on the dotted line.
5. **It's not just the rent level you need to think about** to make a budget. Ask to see a copy of the [Energy Performance Certificate](#) to find out how energy efficient the property is. The higher rated the property is, the cheaper it'll be to keep warm. You should also consider the location and how much travel is likely to cost you as this can make a big difference to your budget.
6. **Try putting together a budget** with different rent levels to see how much disposable income you'll be left with. To help you get a better understanding of your spending and how to manage it more effectively, download a student budgeting spreadsheet [here](#).
7. Ask your new landlord or letting agent where they'll be protecting your **tenancy deposit**. It's against the law to take a deposit and fail to place it within a government scheme. You should receive evidence that it is protected, though if you're unsure, you can check using [Shelter's website](#).

8. Remember, **safety first!** Ask to see the [Gas Safety Certificate](#), and find out if the property will be fitted with a smoke alarm and Carbon Monoxide detector.

9. **Be cautious if you experience any pressure to sign a contract.** Always make sure that you've had time to make a considered decision and a chance to discuss it properly with everyone you're going to live with.

10. When you move in, **complete an inventory** (i.e. a list of all the items in the house and their condition). That way, you have a record of everything so that when you move out, you don't get caught out by a landlord that tries to make you pay for damage that you didn't cause. Ideally, prepare your inventory with the landlord or agent present. But if they show no interest, simply go ahead and prepare your own - and take photographs of any damaged items and unusual wear and tear. Once you've done this, keep a copy and send one to your landlord agent. This should help avoid arguments with the landlord when you move out.

Getting Advice

You can book an appointment with one of our advisers on our website.

Alternatively, email your enquiry to advice@thesu.org.uk